

Something's Growing

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Summary: Link Larkin's life settles on its new course and he isn't complaining. Trink. *Sequel to "Something's Off-Beat"*

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Dedicated: For ****AshleyKay**** on her birthday.

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>Something's Growing <p>I feel like one of those secret agents, hiding in plain sight while spying on someone. I've been here at the refreshment table for a good ten minutes. I've already drunk four cups of punch. Causally, I look over my shoulder to the other end of the table. My gaze once again encounters the back of the big-haired girl's head and Corny's glowing face. He shakes her hand enthusiastically, and his huge grin grows even bigger.<p>

I am not close enough to overhear their conversation, but I have a very strong hunch. And I hope I'm right. Quickly glancing around, I discover with some annoyance that I am not the only one waiting for Corny to wrap up his conversation with the girl. At least eight guys are watching the two, some discreetly, some staring; all of them had been among the group that swarmed around the girl earlier. They had parted like the Red Sea when Corny approached her, however. When he'd led her to the back of the gym, I'd followed at a distance and positioned myself near enough to keep an eye on them without being conspicuous.

I shake my head slightly and reach for another cup. Conspicuous

indeed! I have never done something like this before, spying on and waiting to approach a girl. I've had an effect on girls for years, thanks mainly to the _Corny Collins Show_, where they just fall over me. I have had a few crushes on girls, but nothing ever serious. Yes, Amber and I are now going steady, but in my mind "and I know in hers" it is all a matter of convenience. She is pretty; her mom is the manager of the studio and has my career in her hands. And I'm the most popular guy on the show next to Corny. It only seemed natural that we started dating even though we do not really like each other that way.

But since yesterday I found myself genuinely interested in a girl. And it is almost impossible to explain how and why. She is the complete opposite of what is defined as the perfect dream girl. She glowed with joy and confidence when she danced. And I as watched her from the stage, it suddenly hit me that she was very pretty in her own way, cheeks pink, hair swirling as she danced happily. Her beauty was the kind that required a second look to realize it was there. Her eyes, so large and brown, hinted at it if one looked closely. And I had.

Sighing, I glance over my shoulder in time to see Corny jump in the air and click his heels together. He exchanges a few more words with the girl and is off, dancing up the dance floor back towards the stage. He pauses in his journey to dance with Amber for several seconds before continuing on his merry way.

This is my chance. For the first time since I hopped off the stage after I finished singing, a bit of anxiousness pierces my confidence. What do I say? Do I need to introduce myself? Maybe I should; then she'll introduce herself, and I'll finally learn her name. Or I could just ask her. I should tell her I enjoyed her performance.

Hand shaking ever so slightly, I set my cup on the table and turn to face the girl fully. The space that contained her is empty. What the? I look frantically about and see her hurrying towards the gymnasium's doors. Impulsively I jog after her, my momentary nervousness left behind. There is no way I'm going to wait until tomorrow to speak to her, considering the small possibility I'll miss her again like I did today. No can do.

I rapidly gain on her with my longer legs. "Leaving so soon?" I wince. Of all the things I could have said

The girl stops abruptly, and so do I. She swiftly faces me, eyes wide with surprise. We stare at each other. "L-L-Link!" she speaks first.

Warmth fills my cheeks and I swallow thickly. It is first time she's spoken to me, and the way she says my name is too adorable. "You know my name, but I don't know yours," I confess with a sheepish smile and jam my hands into my pockets.

Bitting her lower lip, she folds her hands together and looks down at the floor, an echo of when I approached her in detention. My heart sinks and my smile fades.

Eventually she lifts her head and looks me straight in the eye. I feel like she's seeing right through me, past the cool, self-centered, popular Link to the real Link the world has hardly

ever glimpsed. I return her gaze, unblinking, holding my breath.

"Tracy."

"What?" I say dazedly, air leaving my lungs.

"My name is Tracy," she replies in a small voice.

Tracy "I like it." She blushes and sneaks a glance towards the doors. "Are you leaving already?" I ask worriedly.

"Oh, no! No, I wasn't going to go yet."

I know I'm grinning like an idiot but can't help myself. "Good."

She gives me a shy smile. "Thank you for suggesting I dance for Corny."

"No, problem, darlin'," I tease lightly and shrug. "Glad you made it." That's a huge understatement.

"He asked me to be on the show," she answers my unspoken question. Her whole face glows with disbelief and excitement as she bounces on the balls of her feet.

Outwardly I grin again; inside I'm throwing confetti, cheering, and dancing upside down. Tracy's going to be on the show! Thank you, Corny. I will now definitely see her almost every day for several hours. For a moment I entertain fantasies of her and me dancing the jitterbug together on the show. "Congratulations!"

"Thanks."

"I think your news deserves a celebratory dance," I say softly.

Tracy tilts her head like a curious sparrow. "Really?" her voice is just as quiet.

"Really." I extend my right hand to her. "Would you like to dance with me, Tracy?" _Please say yes, pleaseâ€¦|_

Her eyes shine as she looks between me and my hand. Silently she nods and starts to place her hand in mine. The band begins playing again, a slow song compared to the faster ones they've played all night. Tracy's hand halts midair. She looks up at me questioningly, uncertain if I will tell her to forget about my offer.

I bring up my hand until our palms touch and gently curl my fingers around hers. "Come on, Trace," I encourage with a smile.

Her tense shoulders relax, and she squeezes my hand in reply. I lead her onto the dance floor. Kids stare. But I am not embarrassed. I _want_ this dance. Facing each other, I place my arm around her waist. Tracy rests her hand on my shoulder. And we dance, on and on.

As I lose myself in her brown eyes, a line from the last song I sang brushes my mind: _I'm the ladies' choice_. The corners of my mouth

twitch. If I'm the choice of one certain girl, that will be more than enough for me.

THE END

End
file.